

How to Solve the Irish Question

BY



G. K. Chesterton

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“What is wrong with Ireland, anyway?” said the man with the newspaper. “Well,” said the other, “It’s this way: When we entered the war to free the world, Ireland naturally thought she was part of the world. When she found she wasn’t, the trouble started.”



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Queen's University at Kingston

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in New Witness



The debate on the Home Rule Bill makes one thing plain; the English Parliament does not understand what has happened in Ireland. They propose their pitiful amendments, they discuss whether the Southern Unionists will be sufficiently guarded under this scheme or that scheme, they even declaim against giving any sort of parliament to any part of Ireland; and meanwhile Ireland is lost to us. Whatever the members at Westminster may do, that fact remains; the Union is broken, and England will govern Ireland never again. Let us hold this reality in the whirlpool of petulant anger! Ireland is lost to us; but it is still possible that she may become a friend.

Englishmen may well be anxious when they look across St. George's Channel, and see a nation which has dared to take its destinies into its own hands. We know how our politicians deceive us; we know that England is governed by an alien crew for their own dirty purposes, but we submit Ireland has learnt the same lesson in bitterer fashion, though that is largely because the Irish have never submitted. But for our greater docility the massacre of Peterloo might have been repeated and repeated unto this day. In Ireland the massacre of '98 has been repeated and repeated. And the promises of politicians have been made and broken, made and broken until a politician's promise has become as bitter a jeer in Ireland as it should be here. Yet the Irish are a magnanimous people, and they actually could believe that when Home Rule was granted in 1914 it was granted. Not even the gunrunning of Carson and the rhodomontade of the Ulster convention undeceived them. But when the War began, and their generous offer to the Allied cause of all they had and were was flouted, they understood. They understood that from our unspeakable politicians nothing was to be expected but treason, and nothing was to be hoped but death. From that moment the Sinn Fein movement became the Irish movement. Henceforth the motives and actions of English politicians would not be questioned; they would simply be ignored.

The Law of Sinn Fein only Law in Ireland

Ireland proceeded to govern herself and with the continual interference of the English military, she is governing herself to-day. If she is governing herself badly it is because all the machinery of the law is in alien hands. The law abiding Sinn Fein people obey the Sinn Fein law; the others find no law to obey. For remember that the English provost marshal is respected by not one single Irishman and if there is any limit to outrage in Ireland it is because Sinn Fein is strong. Let us remember this! If there is any restraining influence in Ireland it is Sinn Fein, if there is any law in Ireland it is the law of Sinn Fein. The Englishman in Ireland is regarded by the Irish as an armed brigand. How can we expect the Irish hooligan (and there are hooligans in all countries) to pay any respect to his law?

But the government of Ireland is the Sinn Fein government. We may regard it as an unlawful government, but it exists. And there is no other government in Ireland. For no government is possible without the consent of the governed; and to government by the English Ireland will never consent.

Ireland has Revolted from England

All this debate about how much power should be given to the Dublin Parliament to be set up under the new Bill is futile, then. The only useful debate is what we are to do with the Sinn Fein Parliament. Shall we acknowledge it? or shall we root it out? Ireland has revolted from England, and either we must acquiesce, or we must make war against Ireland.

In any case this half war must stop—this means provocation to outrage, this imprisonment without trial, this proclaiming all meetings, this raiding of private dwellings and infant schools. All this must stop—unless our purpose is merely to steal the resolution of the Irish and to make the defeating of them all the more difficult.

Irish Republic Refuses to Play England's Game

We know, of course, what our politicians intend—by continual pin-pricks to provoke the Sinn Feiners to a physical revolt which can be repressed by aeroplanes and field artillery. Our mean rulers would then be able to take the high tone and relate to the League of Nations the regrettable necessity of having to meet force with force. But that cock will not fight. The Sinn Feiners are too clever. They will go on quietly organizing the country in the face of the invaders.

They will do that no less if a dummy parliament is set up in Dublin and another dummy parliament in Belfast. It is hard for our politicians to understand, but they must understand it, that here no trickery will avail. Mere paper Acts of Parliament may be pulped before they are printed. Nothing will serve to reconcile the two countries but a measure which will give to Ireland full rights of self-government. Other-

wise let them declare that Ireland shall not have self-government, and proceed to repress the national movement with fire and sword.

A Blot upon England's Pride

We do not suggest that the strategic unity of the British Isles should be shattered. That must not happen, and it need not happen. But either we must recognize that de facto government of Ireland as the government de jure, or we must do the other thing. We must not, we dare not, go on playing this dirty, silly game of the cat and the mouse.

The Irish quarrel is a wound in our side. The cash outlay is a trifle compared with the spiritual exhaustion it causes. The Irish quarrel is a blot upon our pride. We that have fought for the freedom of the world are now fighting to keep a little people from their freedom. All the old arguments of the tyrant come tripping to our lips. Spain used them in the Netherlands, Prussia and Russia used them in Poland, Germany used them in Belgium. If we deceive ourselves so much the worse. But our rulers are not deceived. They plan the destruction of Ireland as a nation because their national feet is so strong, because there the flame of freedom burns so brightly. It will be England's turn next. Let the English people remember that! Sinn Fein is struggling against our oppressors. It is true that the Yiddish caucus-monger uses English soldiers to fight his battles in Ireland; but he will use English soldiers to fight his battles in England, southern troops to cow the south. Sinn Fein is not in revolt against England, but against the unclean gang which usurp our country's name. The days of the politician will be numbered when the flag of St. Patrick and St. George float side by side.

Once again we ask our readers not to cite the outrages which are happening in Ireland as reason for not granting the Irish self-government. They should rather take them as a reason for terminating at once the monstrous pretence of English government in Ireland. If a manager is entirely lacking in the power of management you sack him; if an officer cannot command you supercede him; if a government cannot rule you must get rid of it. The number of policemen and Sinn Feiners is a prime reason for getting rid of Dublin Castle rule.

We know that on this issue we part company with some of our readers, who would have us wreak vengeance for the policemen who have been slaughtered. But we think we had better not talk of wreaking vengeance. There is a black tale of villainy done to the Irish by us and our friends. There are deeds which we dare never forget, and which, as yet, the Irish cannot. Yet once already they have shown themselves willing to put all that behind them and live with us in amity. The stupendous chance was deliberately chucked away; yet it will come again if we contrive to be magnanimous.

Terrible Deeds by English Agents

Let us remember that terrible deeds are being done by English agents against Sinn Feiners, and even by English agents provocateurs against Unionists. Let us remember that in some cases the police know that the murderer is a common criminal, and will not arrest him, lest the burden should be taken from the back of Sinn Fein. Let us remember finally that nothing done by or fabled of the Sinn Feiners to-day can rival the crimes done by England in Ireland. There can be no settlement with the scales for arbiter. In plain justice we can hope for nothing from Ireland but silence and contempt. But if we hold a hand out there is a chance that this great and generous people may grasp it. Let us try!

Idle Thoughts ON Ireland

BY
JEROME K. JEROME

The plan for the solution of the Irish problem most favored by the English upper classes till within a short time ago was the towing of Ireland into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and there sinking her. In my younger days I was under the impression that the suggestion was intended as a joke, amusing at first, but growing tiresome by earnest and unwearyed repetition as the years rolled on. Closer acquaintance with the political mentality of the English upper classes leaves me in doubt as to whether the idea may not have occurred to them as a serious alternative to the granting of Home Rule. One reflects that the English upper classes are not guilty of much wit and humor, and drastic measures for the removal of the Irish difficulty have always appealed to their imagination. Possibly the spread of education may account for this particular scheme having fallen into disrepute. It is put forward nowadays by only very old gentlemen who generally clinch the argument by fiercely waving their umbrellas. The more intelligent of the Unionist Party appear to have convinced themselves of its impracticability. The later and much more sensible plan now advocated is that all Irish irreconcilables, together with their wives and families (In politics, an 'irreconcilable' person is a man who will not reconcile himself to our idea of what is good for him) should be 'removed' from Ireland and their places be supplied by English settlers. Oliver Cromwell

tried this method under conditions much more favorable to success; though I doubt if to-day we are thanking him for his contribution to the Irish problem. But the idea is gaining favor with the English Military Party and cannot be dismissed as altogether unimportant. Its possibilities are being discussed in our clubs and drawing-rooms, and already there is an echo in the Press revealing the underground currents of savagery that are everywhere threatening European civilization. The Press can be eloquent enough preaching the sacredness of constitutional methods to Labor. But where the interests of the classes are concerned it never hesitates to advocate recourse to Direct Action. The late Lord Salisbury's plan for twenty years of resolute government works alright provided the nation to be governed were not equally resolute never to submit. For three hundred years all the resources of the British Empire have been strained to the subjection of Ireland. And to-day this little nation of four million souls is in more defiant mood than ever, declaring that there is only one thing that will content her—the independence of Ireland.

Why should it frighten us? Why is England the only country that dare not live side by side with a free people? If the French were a little people, I suppose we should be arguing the same way, declaring that we must conquer France and hold her down, because she happens to be only twenty miles from Dover. We should recall her past history, all her acts of aggression against us, all her threatenings, her unfriendly allusion to 'perfidious Albion,' the centuries of misunderstanding and mutual dislike. Can we allow a country as near to us as France to assert her independence? So it would be urged. What a jumpingoff ground for our enemies! Why, her guns from Calais could rake our coasts. Our merchantmen could no longer ride the English Channel in security. Sorry. Any little thing we can do to make the French people happy and contented we will out of our generosity consider. Frenchmen shall be represented even to the excess of their due in our Parliament at Westminster. We will even allow them to organize societies for the preservation of the French language. The English Castle in Paris shall rule hem justly, as is our good English way. French peasants shall be paid high wages for serving in the (English) Royal French Constabulary and shall help England to maintain order over Frenchmen. But that France should be allowed her own Government, her own Parliament, to rule herself! The thing is unthinkable. Home Rule, as regards

tramways and electric lighting, perhaps we will permit her. She shall have her National County Council in Paris. Any little thing like that, with pleasure. So long as France remains within the British Empire, so long as she submits to a British Army of Occupation and the control of an English viceroy. France is as near to us as is Ireland. France really could be a danger to us. One cannot forget that there have been times when she has been. Every argument used to justify British rule in Ireland could be used with tenfold force to justify our conquering and holding France. Except this one fact: That we can't do it. France is not a little nation, helpless to resist us.

If America argued as we do, she would conquer and annex Canada, as she easily could do. America dare not allow a British possession from which an enemy's troops could be poured across her border, in whose ports an enemy's navy could shelter in safety, to exist beside her. What should we say, if Spain, using our arguments, were to conquer and annex our ancient ally, Portugal? Suppose Soviet Russia declared that she could not sleep in her bed while there existed on her borders an independent Finland and Poland, aggressive, quarrelsome, always waiting their opportunity to attack her. Can one not imagine the howl of virtuous indignation that would go up from our Imperial Press against Russia, the bully of the smaller nations merely because they happen to be her neighbors?

Why do we foam at the mouth because of the mere suggestion that a little free and independent nation should rise out of the Atlantic Ocean some twenty to fifty miles from our shores? Sooner or later it will have to come to that. The sooner the British public faces the fact and gains control over its nerves, the better for Great Britain. Other nations than the Irish, left to themselves, have overcome difficulties greater than the Ulster problem. Ulster could take care of herself as well within the Irish Parliament as outside it. In every country outside Ireland and the Irish have proved themselves practical politicians, capable of government. It is an agricultural country. And agricultural countries are conservative by instinct. There is no sense in half-measures. They invariably produce the maximum of evil to the minimum of good. Let Ireland go, with God's blessing and a shake of the hand. And the hate and evil of a thousand years will be drowned. And out of the sea will arise a friendly nation that we can live with side by side.

ORANGE AND GREEN

Appeal to Common Sense of Ulster Unionists

SPREAD THE LIGHT

By CAHIR HEALY



Come, let us reason together! We have been shying bolts and bricks at each others heads for a long while, on occasion. Let us make an exchange of weapons and throw chunks of reason instead; we may raise new bumps of thought.

You want to continue the Union; I want to end it? That much is undisputed. My reason for ending it is that the Union has not proved a success to either of us. My proof? Very simple. Your people and mine, alike, have had to flee from this land in search of bread. If the laws were good, why did they have to go? Men don't flee from humane laws and prosperity. Millions of Ulster men have had to go over the world like wandering Jews. The young and the strong went leaving behind the aged, the children and the feeble. The wonder is that our remaining population is as strong and virile as it is.

The while Ulster was bled of her children—Orange and Green—England increased her own population.

These emigrants left us poor. For it is clear that it costs from £200 to £400 to feed, clothe, and

educate a man to manhood. Then just when he has become an asset to the state instead of an expense, he is shipped abroad like a ripened fruit. He goes to enrich another country. Figure, if you can, the hundreds of thousands of pounds Ulster has lost in all these years by emigration alone.

Who was it that caused your able sons to be shipped out of your country like cattle for the strangers' market?

I know it is a dangerous thing to attempt to break up idols. You will recall the story of Paul and the silversmiths. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Great is prejudice, great is bigotry, which bring no small gains to the wily craftsmen engaged in its secret propagation.

There was the Catholic Emancipation Act. How your fathers feared it coming and threatened to kick the Crown into the Boyne water if it came. But it came, bringing a measure of relief to many of your fellow countrymen, and nothing happened to your hurt. You were all better friends and neighbors than before, and the Crown—sure, you forgot all about it.

THE BROKEN COVENANT

Don't mind Carson! He swore a solemn Covenant with you to stick together. That solemn oath, sworn in "the face of God," has been violated by Carson and the Ulster Council in the case of your brethren in Monaghan and Donegal. How can you place further confidence in men who break an oath so solemn? The truth is that they fear to trust the Protestant majority in Ulster; Carson anticipates they would not long remain a majority as a few of them have had their eyes opened of late.

What we offer you is equal rights and liberties in a free land. We make no conditions, What prejudice offers you is a partnership in an Empire that is tottering down to ruin, eaten up with financial and moral decay. For Britain is like a spendthrift that is sinking daily deeper and deeper into debt, until the whole world have become so suspicious that its creditors will lend no more. Britain's outgo exceeds its income by many millions yearly; in 1918 Ireland's exports exceeded its imports by £38,000,-000.

COSTLY SLAVERY

Dennark is a prosperous country with a population of nearly three millions; yet it governs itself for one fourth the amount annually extracted from Ireland. Norway has a population of two and a half millions and it protects its trade and its people at much the same figure.

Spain has twenty millions of happy people, and an army and navy, and yet it costs almost as much to crucify and hold down Ire-

land as to govern the great Spanish nation. Open your eyes to facts and figures, and the mist of prejudice will gradually unfold from your darkened vision.

Ireland has a population greater than that of Norway, Denmark, or Switzerland; an area twice greater than either Belgium, Holland, Denmark or Switzerland.

The governing of free Denmark and Greece costs seven millions a year. *Ireland for the 1919-20 accounting period cost the people forty-five millions.* Just think of it!

Liberty costs £1 per head in Switzerland, £2 18s in Greece, £3 1s in Potrugal, £4 2s in Sweden. *In Ireland slavery costs us £10 9s per head.*

Two men it is said, quarrelled for long over the ownership of a cow. While they quarrelled a third man milked the cow unheeded. Great Britain is milking Ireland dry with taxes the while you and I argue over the system of government we prefer

Outside Belfast the linen industry is the biggest industry in Ulster. There is almost as much money in linen as in shipbuilding. We are proud of our pre-eminence in this respect. Yet there would be no linen industry in Ulster to-day if it had not been for the Irish Parliament. England at one time put a duty of 30 per cent. upon Irish linen and at the same time paid a bounty to English competitors, so that our industry would have died had not the Irish Parliament come to the rescue and imposed a tax upon Munster, Leinster and Connacht to save it. What Ireland did then a free Ireland would do to-day, for she

cherishes equally the interests and rights of all the children of the nation.

BEHOLD THE LIGHT!

Do you fear persecution? We have never persecuted you. In the South and West your co-religionists prosper on Catholic trade. The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church recently declared that the churches and manses of his congregation escaped injury even in the most troubled areas. We have no quarrel with any fellow-countryman or fellow-Christian; our only quarrel is with our Oppressor, and your Oppressor too, if you think seriously over it.

Men make strife between us that they may use us for their own ends. Evil influences are at work; they appeal to you to drive forth from your workshops a fellow worker who merely wants to earn bread for his children. Are you happier after

you have attacked his churches and his schools? Will the secret influences in the background make up to you in lost wages for the days you thus spend? Look out across the world, and see if there be any worker anywhere who treats a fellow Christain and comrade as you treat him?

And we used to hear so much of "civil and religious liberty."

No Catholic workman in Dublin or Cork quarrels with or does hurt to his Protestant mate.

The new day is reddening the sky the world over. Take the bandage from your darkened eyes, my brother.

You are still in time to claim your natural heritage—a freeman in a free nation.

William and the Boyne are dead. The Irish nation lives, and the Irish nation is in need of all her children.



Irish Commerce Strangled

SOME COMMERCIAL ASPECTS OF THE ACT OF UNION OF 1800

*Being some chapters from an historical Survey of the English warfare on
the Prosperity of Ireland, with particular notice to the
destruction of the Cotton Industry*

The commercial freedom of Ireland lasted from 1780 to 1800. In the last seven years the position was further strengthened by the admission of American produce into England from Ireland. There was nothing which an Irish manufacturer could produce, an Irish farmer grow, or an Irish merchant buy which could not be sold to any market in the world. Ireland possessed the freedom of the seas. A conjunction of favorable circumstances at home and abroad had secured for Ireland that freedom and the right of her merchants to buy and sell freely in the markets of the world. The Irish Parliament, no matter what its character was, became the guardian, the guarantor, the national pledge and security for that freedom. Whatever its faults and limitations were, and it had many, it possessed the power of the purse, and it also possessed the force to protect Irish trade, Irish commercial and manufacturing interests, to promote tillage and to protect the production and consumption of food on our soil. All

this the Irish Parliament unquestionably did. We propose to put in evidence the petitions presented by the merchants and manufacturers of Ireland to the Irish Parliament in 1800.

We begin with Belfast. It is the practice nowadays of the boosters of the "Ulster Bugaboo" to attribute the alleged prosperity of Ulster to the "Union" with England. Here is the "Petition of the Merchants, Traders, Gentlemen, and Inhabitants of Belfast against a Legislative Union with Great Britain"—(Irish Commons, Jol., Feb. 5, 1800):

A petition of the Merchants, Traders, Gentlemen, and Inhabitants of Belfast, whose names are thereunto subscribed, was presented to the House and read; setting forth that the petitioners are firmly attached to the Royal Person and family of his Majesty, and the Principles of the Constitution; the principles of the Constitution; that the Petitioners beg leave to express their most heartfelt concern at finding the Measure of a Legis-

lative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, which has been rejected by the uninfluenced sense of the House last Session of Parliament, is again to be brought forward to be reconsidered in this Session; that in consequence of the Constitution of this Kingdom having been happily and finally settled in 1782, through the paternal care of his Majesty, the liberality of the British Parliament, and the firmness and virtue of the Irish Parliament, this Nation in general, and this great and opulent Town in particular, has flourished in commerce, manufacture, wealth, and prosperity, beyond the hopes almost of the most sanguine; that they are unalterably attached to that Constitution, and the blessings they enjoy under it, and therefore cannot consent to make an experiment of so alarming and desperate a measure as that of totally and irrevocably annihilating the Irish Parliament and Constitution—an experiment of such enormous magnitude as to involve in it the existence of Ireland as a Nation, their property, and their liberties, extinguishing the one and placing the other under the control of a Legislature, in which their Representatives may be outnumbered five to one—an experiment, if once tried, can never be recalled—content, therefore, with the blessings under the present happy Constitution and connection with Great Britain the Petitioners now enjoy, and, therefore, praying the House to leave them in Possession of them, and restore them unimpaired, at the expiration of this Parliament, that

Constitution, that they may transmit them to Posterity.

It is clear from this Petition that Belfast was rising in wealth and prosperity long before the Union. The merchants attribute the origin of their prosperity to the Parliament of 1782. Whatever may have been the effects of that measure, it cannot be contended now that Belfast owes its prosperity to the Union, as has been so often and so violently asserted of late. It is clear also that Belfast had no notion of separation or partition from the rest of Ireland. There is no pretense that they are Scotch-Irish, or a British colony. Very striking is the declaration of the Belfast merchants that the experiment of the Union 'involves the "existence of Ireland as a Nation". There is not a word about "Ulster" in the whole petition. The merchants of Belfast regarded themselves as members of the Irish Nation, and not as members of a Province. They speak shrewdly of the danger of being outnumbered five to one at Westminster, showing that they regarded the Irish representation as a National unit. The religious question is not even referred to in the petition, which disposes effectively of the new-born English hatched—"bugaboo." Finally, they assert, as did all the opponents of the Union, that the failure of incorporation must lead to separation as the only possible alternative.

The merchants of Dublin presented their petition on the same day. It is a short, but highly interesting document, which corroborates their Belfast brethren in

their views of the commercial interest of their country, resting on the settlement of 82.' It is as follows:

A Petition of the Masters, Wardens, and brethren of the Holy Trinity Guild of Merchants of the City of Dublin, under common seal, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth that the Petitioners, deeply interested in the Commerce and Propserity of Ireland, are justly alarmed at the ruinous consequences which they conceive must inevitably arise from the adoption of a Legislative Union between this Kingdom and Great Britain; that the unexampled prosperity of Ireland since the Constitution was restored and irrevocably ratified in 1782 has arisen from the exercise of a free and independent Legislature.

We now come to the Petitions of the Irish manufacturers, which were eight in number, and furnished the clearest evidence of the importance of the Free Trade, and the right to use the highways of the seas without restriction or restraint. The first is of the same date as the Merchants'—Irish Commons Jol., p. 24):

A Petition of the Master Manufacturers in the Woollen, Cotton, Silk, and Mixed Branches on behalf of themselves and the many thousands artisans in their employment, was presented to the House and read; setting forth that the Manufacturers of this Country having, since the year 1782, increased in a rapid manner, Petitioners with all gratitude attribute that increase to the fostering care of the House; that the Petitioners, in confidence of the security of the Con-

stitution of 1782 and the Protection resulting from a resident Legislature, having expended large sums of money in forming Establishments in their various Branches of Business; that the Petitioners are penetrated with a most lively affliction at learning that the Measure of a Legislative Union with Great Britain is revived and now pending, which, while it leaves Ireland without a Constitution *Entrusts the Guardianship of its Manufacturers to the Parliament of another Kingdom under whose Control, previous to 1782, they had been nearly annihilated*; that the petitioners being conscious that they have always acted a loyal part, and contributed in their due Proportion to the wants and Necessities of the States, conceived that they have not forfeited the Protection of the House, and that the Spirit and Virtue of the Parliament will, in this trying Crisis, display itself in converting so deadly an Evil; and, therefore, pray that the House will review the beneficial Effects of their superintending Care and not transfer to a rival Country the Guardianship of the Manufacturers of Ireland and that thousands yet unborn to bless them.

Alas, millions have been born, but the descendants of the Irish manufacturers are principally to be found in the United States and Canada, and no blessing for the Irish Parliament is now available. The Irish manufacturers had no delusion about English capital coming to Ireland, as Pitt promised. They knew that Irish capital was invested in Ireland under the Guardianship of the Irish Parliament, and

they knew that when the guardians were gone there would be no capital and no development forthcoming. They knew, as men of common sense, that English capital would not come to Ireland under the Union, and time has proved that they were right and Pitt was wrong.

On Feb. 5 the Corporation of Bricklayers and Plasterers, or Guild of St. Bartholomew, in the course of a unique Petition against the Union, declared that "to this Constitution Ireland is indebted for the abundant Wealth that has lately flowed into her Bosom, that has spread the Mansion and the Villa over her Plains, and adorned the Towns and Cities with munificence and splendour, and that has given to the Occupation of the Petitioners a Measure of Prosperity and Importance which, in the former enslaved and abject state of Ireland, it could never have attained." No such petition could be presented to-day.

The most important group of petitions against the Union came from the cotton manufacturers. On Feb. 28, the Cotton Spinners, Calico and Muslin Manufacturers, and Calico Printers of the City of Dublin presented a Petition against the Union. It set forth "that the Cotton Manufacturers of Ireland, from its first introduction was carried on in a very narrow and confined manner, until the Legislature, viewing the great extent to which the Branch was carried on in England, and foreseeing the great advantages which must result to this country by encouraging it at home did grant diverse aids by *Parliamentary Bounties and by Duties of*

Protection on the Import, to promote and establish it here; that from this system founded in wisdom and adopted from experience, these benefits have resulted, which it was natural to expect, inasmuch as this country, whose wants were formerly supplied by importation, is now enabled to provide for nearly the entire of its own consumption." The Petition then goes on to relate as a result of this encouragement, they embarked large sums of money in the erection of buildings and machinery and bound themselves to pay heavy rents, and that until very lately those works were fully occupied. The Petitioners then proceed to state they "have seen with just alarm and with deep concern that in the event of the intended Union between Great Britain and Ireland it is proposed that the present duties payable on the importation of cotton manufactures shall cease, and that a reciprocal duty of ten per cent. on the value shall be substituted in lieu thereof; that Petitioners cannot too strongly call upon the wisdom and attention of the House to take into their consideration how little suited to circumstances of this country it is to enter into a competition with Great Britain on any of her established manufactures on a system of low duties, her immense capital, with all the advantages which flow from it in the aids of machinery, the supply of materials, the capability of credits, the benefits of inland water carriage, the cheapness of fuel, the incalculable advantages resulting from the exclusive possession of her own market, together with her unbounded export trade,

which Petitioners apprehend do strongly point to them that the utmost limit of their rational hope can only extend to possession of their own market for a long period yet to come, *and obliges them to consider the proposed reduction of duty to ten per cent. as a measure of certain and inevitable destruction to the cotton manufacture of Ireland.*"

There is here a complete refutation of the arguments of the promoters of the Union, alleging that British capital would flow into Ireland as a result of hoisting the Union Jack on College Green. The cotton manufacturers made out an unanswerable case against the transfer of the legislature to Westminster.

Nor was Belfast behind Dublin in the protests of the cotton manufacturers. On March 6 was presented "A Petition of several Cotton and Muslin Manufacturers residing in the Town and Neighborhood of Belfast ' ' ' setting forth that the Petitioners have expended large sums of money in erecting and providing Mills, Machinery, and necessary Implements for carrying on their manufactures, and with much perseverance and exertion, after encountering many difficulties, have in a great degree succeeded in establishing the manufacture in their part of the Kingdom, whereby many thousands of industrious persons are usefully employed, and consequently a national benefit of considerable magnitude is obtained; that it is entirely owing to the liberality of Parliament in affording protection and encouragement to this manufacture by ,imposing reasonable duties

upon the importation of cotton goods, that Petitioners were induced to prosecute and carry on the same; that Petitioners have heard with great concern and regret that it is in contemplation to reduce some part of the duties at present payable upon the importation of cotton manufactures into this Kingdom, which if, carried into effect, Petitioners are well assured and convinced would tend to root out and annihilate the Irish manufactures in that line, and would throw Petitioners and their working people immediately idle, and render their machinery and implements useless, and therefore praying the House to take their case into consideration and to permit the present duties payable upon the importation of cotton goods to be continued in future."

Such was the impressive second petition from Belfast. It differs from the other petitions insomuch as the Belfast manufacturers merely asked for a continuance of the protective tariff enjoyed under the Irish Parliament. The attitude of Pitt on this issue is very important, because the question raised was simply whether the English Parliament would continue the protective tariff in favor of the Irish cotton manufacture. Pitt could have framed a measure of Union continuing the protective tariff on cotton goods. The fact that he did not do so is a very important piece of evidence against the English Government.

On Feb. 17, William and John Orr, cotton manufacturers, presented a petition for compensation in the event of a Legislative Union

with Great Britain. They stated that they were natives of Scotland and had for many years carried on an extensive manufactory of muslins and calico, and had expended upwards of £30,000 sterling in buildings and machinery situated in the County Down, the County Wicklow, and City of Dublin. They were encouraged by the duties on importation whereby "the Legislature had (and as Petitioners conceive with great wisdom) provided protection to these manufactures by guarding against a fatal interference in the market of similar goods manufactured in Great Britain; that the Petitioners have seen with much alarm the terms of the proposed Regulation of Duties to be established in the event of a Union between Great Britain and Ireland, which terms the Petitioners beg leave with great deference to say *will give a fatal blow to the cotton manufacture of Ireland*, not only from the prospect of duties being withdrawn twenty years hence, but also that the duties proposed to be immediately established *will not permit the manufacture to be continued here.*"

On March 1 appears a petition of Thomas Deaves of Blarney, setting forth that he is the proprietor of a cotton mill for the spinning of cotton twist by water. He gives his expenditure as fifteen thousand pounds, covering a period of twelve years' labor, and asks for compensation "in the event of a Union between the two countries, terms which must inevitably destroy the property of the petitioner, and be particularly fatal to the branch that

has employed his capital and long industry."

On March 18 a Petition of the Cotton Spinners of Balbriggan was presented to the House, and on the following day a petition of Nicholas Thomas, and James Grimshaw, of Whitehouse (Belfast), Cotton Manufacturers, and their Printers and Spinners, was presented in terms the same as the Belfast Merchants' Petition, protesting against the Union.

Here we have abundant evidence to show that without doubt the English Union involved the destruction of the Irish Cotton Manufacture. The only question that remains to be solved in this regard is whether it was merely an accident or whether it was a deliberate stranglehold on this particular Irish industry. It appears from the Castlereagh Correspondence (iii., p. 207) that Lord Castlereagh had it under his consideration to compensate the Irish cotton manufacturers by the payment of the sum of £200,000—a large capital expenditure in those days. It is clear therefore, that destruction of the Irish cotton manufacture was contemplated by Lord Castlereagh Pitt, and the Unionists. On March 7 Pitt wrote Castlereagh from Downing Street on the subject of the duties on cotton: "I certainly shall regret any interval which postpones the reduction of duties on any article of manufacture to the amount consistent with the general principle of liberal intercourse which which we wish to establish, and I am not wholly without apprehension that any exception in favor of Ireland may make it difficult here

to resist introducing some exception of a similar nature. ' ' ' I know you will be as anxious as myself to make no greater concession than is necessary.' Here mark the word "concession." The English regarded it as a "concession" that Ireland should be allowed to carry on an industry at all. While Pitt was writing this, Castlereagh was scratching his quile in the Castle. This letter, which is dated March 7, and addressed to Mr. Rose (Corres. iii., p. 252), contains the damning admission: "*It is evident under these circumstances that a sudden reduction of the duty must, at least for a time, ruin the trade which now employs from 30,000 to 40,000 persons.*"

Thus Castlereagh and Pitt deliberately strangled the Irish cotton manufacture, the fruit of the great Free Trade movement, the issue of the freedom of the seas, the industry whose material was fetched from the United States across the wide ocean, and whose establishment in Ireland was fostered and encouraged by the only prohibitory tariff of 35 to 50 per cent. imposed by the Irish Parliament. The annual value manufactured in Ireland was stated (Corres. iii., p. 251) at from six to seven hundred thousand, while the import from England amounted to the lesser sum of £130,000 of fustians. "The entire consumption in calicoes and muslins is supplied by ourselves," wrote Castlereagh in the Castle on the fatal March 7, when Pitt communicated the doom of the Irish Cotton Manufacture in a private letter which he dared not make official.

The Irish Cotton Manufacture

vanished so completely after the Union that its existence was forgotten, until the researches of our economic historians recalled the facts of its former existence. Yet our history is silent on the events which caused its ruin.

In 1800 we imported only £130,000 of English cotton. To-day we import about ten millions worth of goods which were formerly made in Ireland, and could be made under the fostering care of an Irish Parliament with power to levy taxes and command access to the trade of the seas. Ireland is as well suited to the cotton industry as England is and we are geographically nearer to the sources of supply of the raw material, and we are also nearer to the markets of sale abroad.

The loss of the Cotton industry meant to Ireland much more than the disappearance of a trade. The shipments of cotton were, and are, the principal elements in the shipping of the Atlantic, and in the financial and commercial intercourse of the United States with Europe. The possession of the cotton imports by Liverpool was the deciding factor in the institution of the trans-Atlantic mail services. Ireland in losing the cotton industry lost also the possession of the Atlantic terminal station and the facilities of direct cabling enjoyed by Liverpool, whereas if the cotton industry had grown, Belfast would have taken the place of Liverpool in the commerce and shipping of the world.

The same causes which led to the strangling of the cotton industry had an equally choking effect on many other Irish branches of enter-

prise. The freedom of the seas had brought a new life to our country. The brine of the ocean entering the nostrils of our people had stimulated and refreshed them as never before in their history. The knowledge that they were free to work and again secure and ship their goods to any market on the wings of the wind, was a mighty incentive to industry.

But this short glorious era was now in 1800 to be brought to a sudden and inglorious end. The plans of Pitt and his lieutenants, Castlereagh, Sheffield, Auckland; Dundas and Peel, were now to be directed at a proposed Union, which meant for Ireland the sacrifice, at one stroke, of all the liberty she had won in so many years of struggle and despairing effort. All the industries which were struck down, one by one, by the Navigation Acts, the Cattle Acts, the Woollen Prohibition, and the Commercial Restraints, were killed at one shot by the Act of so-called Union. It was in reality an Act of Destruction. •

Such were the commercial arguments against union with England. History has proved the validity, strength, weight and rectitude of these arguments. What has become of the calico and muslin manu-

facture? What of the cotton mills If any trace exists, it is found in the lingering ruins. The cotton mills and factories of our country were laid low and destroyed, like the castles and the churches of old.

The main argument of Pitt, that English capital would flow into Ireland, was effectively and unanswered dispelled by John Foster, Speaker of the Irish Commons, who said, "every man must look to draw his capital out of it (the Cotton Industry) as speedily as he can, and if not before the gradual reduction to 10 per cent., certainly before the total extinction of that 10 per cent. which is to take place in twenty years." Further, he asserted that it was evident that no capital will come from England to a manufacture so circumstanced, and that if it requires so high a percentage to protect it against English import, it can never find a market from hence in England. Such was Foster's answer. No English capital for Irish industries came into Ireland as a result of the Union, and it never will. On the contrary, the unfortunate people who invested money in the Irish Cotton Industry were ruined. Verily the capital argument does not favor Union. It favors Separation. History teaches us that we require to be protected from England's embraces.



Liberty costs £1 per head in Switzerland

" " £2-18-0 " " Greece

" " £3- 1-0 " " Portugal

" " £4- 2-0 " " Sweeden

**In Ireland |Slavery costs £10-9-0
per head.**



Lloyd George, speaking in the British Parliament on March 7, 1917, stated:

“Centuries of brutal and often ruthless injustice, and what is worse...centuries of insolence and insult have driven hatred of British rule into the very marrow of the Irish race. The long records of oppression, proscription and expatriation have formed the greatest blot on the British fame of equity and eminence in the realm of government. There remains...the invincible fact that to-day she (Ireland) is no more reconciled to British rule than she was in the days of Cromwell.”

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